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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

SUMMARY OF NRO ACTIVITIES

The following are the major fields of activity in which the NRO has been actively involved during the past three months under the direction of Dr. McMillan, the new D/NRO. This summary will stress those items in which the major parties have been CIA, DD/NRO and NRO.

1. Satellite Programming and Launching

At the time that Dr. McMillan took over the NRO, it was already becoming apparent that the programming of satellite reconnaissance for the National Reconnaissance Program was woefully inadequate. Old systems were being phased out before new systems had been proved and adequate back-up equipment was available. One of the first items on which Dr. McMillan worked was the development of a new schedule and provision of back-up boosters, payloads, etc. However, in most cases these were long-term items and, therefore, would not affect the program within the first 5 or 6 months. The unsatisfactory situation was accentuated by the continued failures in the satellite program with only 1 successful mission during the past 3 months. Senior CIA officials on frequent occasions directed the D/NRO to take active steps to improve the reliability of these systems, and he in turn put pressure on Gen. Greer's organization and the prime contractor, Lockheed. CIA also took active steps to insure maximum care by ITEK, its payload contractor, even though no failures had occurred in this part of the system. Gen. Carter and I made 2 separate trips to Gen. Greer and were assured that all possible measures were being undertaken. Despite this, failures continued, and it was only after the failure in early May that, as a result of the DCI's strong representations to Lockheed top management followed by several sessions between the D/NRO, DD/NRO, Gen. Greer and Lockheed management, really drastic measures were instituted. The most recent shot appears successful to date indicating that at least some progress has been made in improving reliability. In this general area there does not appear to have been any major source of friction or disagreement between CIA and the NRO except a feeling that there was a reluctance on the part of the AF participants to really face up to the corrective actions which needed to be taken.

2. Satellite Control

Shortly after Dr. McMillan took over, he directed that the

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Satellite Operations Center in CIA be transferred with its key people to the Pentagon and the newly-organized NRO Operations Center. I reluctantly concurred in this action after discussions with the DCL. It did not seem that such a transfer served any particular useful purpose at this time since facilities and support were readily in CIA, and these operations had been controlled very satisfactorily in the past from the CIA Center. The transfer of this activity to the NRO at the same time relieved CIA of the responsibility which had been previously assigned to it for control of the CORONA and ARGON satellite operations.

3. Research on Photographic Processing

After many delays occasioned by attempts to satisfy the NRO Staff on the scope of an R&D program for photographic processing at Eastman Kodak, CIA on 19 December 1962 issued a contract to Eastman for work in this area. At Dr. Charyk's direction, Gen. Greer's office negotiated a similar contract with Eastman and directed that CIA withdraw its activity. This I declined to do, and the matter stayed in abeyance until Dr. McMillan took over. The progress of research on both contracts went forward very slowly during this interim period since efforts were being made to assure that no duplication existed between the two projects. The matter was raised again with Dr. McMillan since this was obviously a very unsatisfactory situation and one in which the Government did not look very good. After many discussions Dr. McMillan directed that the CIA contract be cancelled and that Gen. Greer assume technical management for work in this area with CIA handling the covert contractual arrangements. The excuse for this decision was that the AF had other contracts in the processing area, and it would be better to keep all of these centered in one location. I strongly urged the contrary in view of the fact that the processing facility at Eastman which all had agreed should do the highest quality processing for the intelligence community was under the control of CIA and, therefore, that the R&D work would also be appropriate for CIA. On this I was overruled, and CIA has obeyed the NRO directive. This decision could be reversed by fiat without delay to the program.

4. Air Reconnaissance Operations (This is covered in detail elsewhere and will only be treated briefly here). Without consultation with the CIA or the DD/NRO, the NRO drafted a paper establishing the JRC as a part of the NRO with control over air operations. Upon my protest an additional memorandum was prepared by the D/NRO stating that this would not alter CIA's activities in this area. As DD/NRO I nevertheless

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recommended against this type of organization as being unsound, but my views were not accepted by the D/NRO. Recently the matter was raised again by a new directive which tended to be similar to the original one. CIA again objected, and yesterday the DCI put forward strong repercussions against this proposal, and Mr. Gilpatric concurred. A much simpler organizational set up which leaves CIA responsibility essentially unchanged was agreed upon. (Watch this)

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6. High Resolution Camera for IDEALIST

In March the President's Board recommended the urgent development of a higher resolution camera system for the U-2 to avoid the necessity of low levels. The Agency conducted a survey of possible systems which might be adapted to do this job from old U-2 programs, satellite programs and the OXCART program. As a result of this study it appeared that the CORONA camera might be most suitable for this purpose, and tests were recommended using an engineering model which was available at ITEK. Without consultation with any representatives of CIA or ITEK, the D/NRO turned down this suggestion, saying that the camera could not be spared from the high priority program. I reclaimed this decision, and discussions were

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held with ITEK representatives and others, and it became clear that the proposed camera could be made available without interference with the CORONA program. Despite this, more than a month passed in which the NRO insisted on reconsidering all other systems. Finally, authorization was given to go ahead with this original proposal, but in the meantime the program has been delayed for several months. The NRO Staff is still arguing about the point and trying to push alternate systems, the availability of which will be much later and the cost greater.

7. Six Foot Resolution Survey System

ITEK has had a proposal for many months for a M-2 40" focal length version of the MURAL camera to provide approximately 6' resolution survey coverage. Dr. McMillan directed Gen. Greer to establish a study group to investigate alternative proposals for such a survey system. At my instigation CIA representatives were added to this group. The report that was prepared was, in my view, not objective and tended to be biased against both the present MURAL and the M-2 camera system and in favor of the AF E-6. Mr. Kiefer, who had participated in the group, refused to sign the report. I suggested to Dr. McMillan that we have a technical discussion of the report, and when elaborating on my worries about the validity of his recommendations, I was accused by both him and Colonel Martin of being unalterably prejudiced against the AF system. I then discussed the matter with Eugene Fubini in his capacity as monitor for the NRO program and asked him to make an independent evaluation of the report. He did so and reached the same conclusions which I had reached, and after private discussions with McMillan, Dr. McMillan also agreed with these views, and the recommendations of the report were not bought. Instead a mere modest program involving only engineering studies on improved E-6 cameras was approved in place of the very expensive program involving up to 8 flights using the E-6 system which had been cancelled last fall.

8. Additional U-2's for the IDEALIST Program

In February the Agency forwarded to the NRO a request for additional U-2's for the IDEALIST program as a follow-up of Mr.

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Gilpatric's statement to the Special Group that if additional birds were needed, these would be made available to the Agency. I raised this matter with Dr. McMillan shortly after his arrival, and the Agency briefed him in detail on the program. He indicated that he would obtain approval from Gilpatric for the transfer, but we were unable to get any written approval so that one could officially proceed. The NRO Staff, and Col. Geary in particular, were fighting this decision and making every effort to avoid the transfer. Despite repeated attempts on my part, I could get no positive action out of the NRO, and the matter lay unresolved until the DCI raised it with Mr. Gilpatric in May. In the meantime we had lost the opportunity to obtain J-75 engines on a priority basis as their availability will be delayed about 8 months. After many exceptions which culminated in the meeting with the JCS, the final decision has been made to transfer the U-2's to the Agency.

9. TAGBOARD

This has been covered in a separate memorandum []
Briefly, Dr. McMillan after many long discussions directed the transfer of technical management responsibility for TAGBOARD from the Agency to the AF. I protested this decision, and the DCI raised the question with Dr. McMillan, and the directive is still in abeyance. This is a matter which still must be resolved and should be dealt with rapidly. I am not enthusiastic about TAGBOARD as a project, but if TAGBOARD is to be carried forth, I am convinced that it should be carried forth as an Agency project because its use and development are so closely associated with the OXCART and because it is clearly the most covert of the 3 aircraft programs.

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10. NRO Organization and DD/NRO Functions

Early after the signing of the new March Agreement, I sat down and discussed with Dr. McMillan the duties of the DD/NRO in light of this Agreement. He asked me to prepare a terms of reference which I did. In these terms of reference I strongly recommended the assignment of a fulltime assistant in the NRO Staff office and the development of methods for keeping the DD/NRO informed of, and participating in, all of the activities of the NRO. Dr. McMillan and Col. Martin vigorously opposed my having an assistant in the office and indicated that they would guarantee that I would be constantly briefed on the NRO

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activities and that I would be cut in on all of the major decision of the NRO in the same manner as the D/NRO himself. After many misgivings, I reluctantly concurred to this procedure with the understanding that if it didn't work out, it would be changed. The NRO Staff then prepared revised terms of reference which omitted any requirement to co-ordinate D/NRO papers with the DD/NRO. I protested this in writing, but there has been no change in the procedures, and with very few exceptions no papers have been co-ordinated with the DD/NRO. I have frequently protested to Col. Martin who has always argued there never is time despite the fact that the staff work coming out of the NRO is extremely ponderous and delayed. In many cases as a consequence, the D/NRO has signed off on papers involving Agency activities which are factually incorrect and have, or could have, lead to serious embarrassment to the D/NRO or the Agency. The NRO Staff has instituted a practice of daily briefings of the DD/NRO on NRO activities, but over a period of time these tend to be fairly pro forma and involve primarily matters of scheduling, etc. The assignment of a fulltime CIA representative as DD/NRO located in the Pentagon should improve this information situation, but it is absolutely essential that he is informed and consulted before the fact rather than after the fact. Furthermore, it is absolutely essential that the NRO Staff in preparing their staff papers consult with CIA in matters in which CIA is involved prior to preparing formal actions. Time after time the NRO Staff has made misjudgments because they have not made any attempt to consult with those persons responsible for the activity. I believe that Colonel Martin should be given a very strong directive to improve the method of staff operations and to insure that even the minimum terms of the present Agreement are lived up to and that CIA is no longer by-passed.

SIGNED

HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.

14 June 1963

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